HISTORY OF LOUDOUN COUNTY

Loudoun County constitutes a part of the five million acre Northern Neck of the Virginia Proprietary granted by King Charles II of England to seven noblemen in 1649. This grant, later known as the Fairfax Proprietary, lay between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Between 1653 and 1730, Westmoreland, Stafford and Prince William counties were formed within the Proprietary, and in 1742 the remaining land was designated Fairfax County. In 1757, by act of the Virginia House of Burgesses, Fairfax County was divided. The western portion was named Loudoun for John Campbell, Fourth Earl of Loudoun, a Scottish nobleman who served as Commander-in-Chief for all British armed forced in North America and titular Governor of Virginia from 1756 to 1759.

Settling of the Loudoun area began between 1725 and 1730, while it was still owned by Lord Fairfax. Permanent settlers came from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland During the same period, settlers from eastern Virginia of English Cavalier stock came to lower Loudoun and established large tobacco plantations. During the 1720s, a number of Quakers, Germans, Irish and Scots-Irish settled west of the Catoctin Mountains. Quakers formed the settlements of Waterford, Goose Creek (now Lincoln), Harmony (now Hamilton) and Union (now Unison). From 1745 to 1760, Germans from Pennsylvania and Maryland formed the settlement of Lovettsville.

Modern Changes

For more than two centuries, agriculture was the dominant way of life in Loudoun County, which had a relatively constant population of about 20,000. That began to change in the early 1960s, when Dulles International Airport was built in the southeastern part of the county. The airport attracted new businesses, workers and their families to the area.

At the same time, the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area began a period of rapid growth. Major road improvements made commuting from Loudoun County much easier, attracting more and more people to the eastern part of the county. In the last decade, the population of Loudoun County more than doubled.

Today, Loudoun County is a growing, dynamic county of about 312,000 people. Loudoun is known for its beautiful scenery, rich history, healthy diversity of expanding business opportunities, comfortable neighborhoods and high quality public services.

MAP OF LOUDOUN COUNTY